



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 23 November 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
23 NOVEMBER 1968

1. Rumania

The leadership in Bucharest continues a "business-as-usual" appearance; no alarming military moves have been noted in or around Rumania.

2. Israel

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The bombing of a Jewish market place in West Jerusalem yesterday--killing 11 and wounding 55--will undoubtedly provoke a strong Israeli response. If, as seems likely, the Israelis determine that the bombing was an "outside" operation, they may well mount an air strike on one or more of the terrorist bases in Jordan.

3. United Kingdom

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4. Soviet Union

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5. Venezuela-Cuba

The Venezuelan Government is defending its seizure of the Cuban fishing boat on Wednesday as a necessary precaution against any Cuban-backed effort to disrupt the elections scheduled for 1 December. President Leoni told Ambassador Bernbaum on Thursday that he had information that local Communists, presumably with Cuban support, were intending to spark disturbances in connection with the election. There is no confirmation of press reports, however, that the Venezuelans have found evidence that the boat had been sent on a subversive mission.

Havana's ability to retaliate is extremely limited. Cuban action, however, could take the form of hijacking or forcing down one or more of the 24 Venezuelan flights that pass through Cuban air corridors each week. 50X1

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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Hanoi Monitors Control: A recently intercepted message indicates that the North Vietnamese are collecting detailed information on actual Viet Cong control of rural areas in the South. A 13 November message from Hanoi's national intelligence organization to the military intelligence sections of three major Communist commands in South Vietnam sets down a series of reporting requirements dealing with the situation in the countryside. Hanoi instructed these subordinates to report, by province and district, the number of "strategic hamlets destroyed" by Communist forces but reoccupied by the allies from the beginning of the "general offensive" to mid-November.

Hanoi probably has several motives for requesting this kind of information. The statistics would help evaluate the long-range effectiveness of such spectacular but costly military adventures as the Tet attacks and provide a measure of Saigon's ability to recover. In the context of the current negotiations, however, the request also suggests Hanoi could be preparing plans for either a cease-fire or a defined system of territorial control in the South Vietnamese countryside.

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Civil Air Route Arrangements: Scheduled civil air traffic between North Vietnam and Cambodia is to resume beginning the first of next year, after a three-year lapse.

A recently intercepted North Vietnamese message states that Royal Air Cambodia will stop at Hanoi every Tuesday en route to Canton. The flight returns to Phnom Penh via Hanoi the following day. The only flight now available to Hanoi is a Friday ICC flight which carries no commercial passengers.

Beginning in March, the new service is to be expanded to two flights per week. Heretofore, North Vietnamese flying westward were obliged to travel to Nanning or Canton first in order to make connections. The direct Cambodian link now offers an alternative route to and from North Vietnam.

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**II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL
ATTITUDES ON THE WAR**

There is nothing of significance to report to-
day.

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